**3/16/25**

**Mother Hen & Her Chicks**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**Luke 13:31-35**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSV) (2) **Amen.**

Good morning and welcome to all of you that have joined us on the Conference Call and out there in our pews. Thank you for making the continued commitment to this very community of faith. We are definitely better because you are here. I am also blessed because I get yet another opportunity to study and explore the Living Word with each and every one of you. So, as we continue on in this Lenten journey, let’s buckle in and explore things, and see what today’s message might happen to have in store for us.

To start things off, I would venture that some of you may have actually wondered why there was such an awkward image on the front cover of our bulletins. Now, it is okay if you did not happen to notice it, or if you do not even remember it. I encourage you to go ahead and shut your bulletin, or scroll up on your phone, tablet, or computer screen and take another look. (pause) That right there is not just any ordinary chicken, it is actually the very image of a mother hen and her chicks. This image is precisely what we heard about in verse 34. Now, if you happen to ask me this image and this story might seem to possibly fit in better for Sunday, May 11th. However, there of course is a reason why this reading could not just be torn out of this particular spot in our lectionary cycle and just placed on Mother’s Day because we think it might fit better. We need to explore and hear about this different side of Jesus, and His very life and ministry that we are all not so used to hearing about at times. This motherly or maternal side of Jesus is not always front and center. So, let’s enjoy it, and think deeper on it in context of our story here today.

Now, I know for certain that there are probably several people out there in the pews and on the conference call that happen to have fond memories of a loving and caring mother or even a grandmother. With those very memories then I imagine that we know and realize the protection being referred to in our Gospel Reading today. For the very protection and love Jesus desired to deliver was not always something that was expected or even thought of as needed. Those in Jerusalem, even you and I, exhibit our childish or our all-knowing and stubborn ways at times. We wander out of the protective arms of Jesus just like the very chicks have done here in our image, and Jesus tries to gather all of us back in.

Alright, let me press that proverbial pause button and pull out a few of my Bob Ross skills, and paint just a little bit better of a picture for all of us to better understand this mother hen and chick image, because I would venture that the majority of us present probably have never managed to hang out around a chicken coop. Let alone we have probably never been there before or after any kind of threat or crisis has occurred. Thankfully, another Sermon writer put things into perspective like this… “One day, a farmer’s hen house caught fire. He eventually put the fire out, and as he searched through the rubble, he found a scorched hen, dead near her nest, but as he lifted the dead bird, he was surprised to see movement beneath, … five small chicks were found alive under the mother’s body. The mother could have easily have escaped, but she chose to face the fire, and the pain, to protect her young.” (10) That is precisely what Christ is willing to do for you and for I, and it was exactly what He was willing to do for Jerusalem and all the people back then as well. He continually called them in under His wings of protection, just like He does you and I, but sometimes we all just chose not to listen and think we have things handled on our own. However, Christ realizes the constant danger, and even the consuming fires that are lurking, which are that of Satan. That mischievous fallen angel is around tempting and testing us even in places we may not feel like, or even be aware of. Jesus is trying to continually pull us under His wings and offer protection from that. Unfortunately, our errors, and our stepping out from under His wings of protection all too often put us in the line of danger. However, Jesus reaches out just a little further and manages to swoop us under and in to protect us like any awesome mother or grandmother would do. He pulls us back in under His wings and is willing to face the fire and the pain in order to protect each and every one of us at all costs. Christ’s desire is for us all to live eternally with Him regardless of our mistakes. However, as you can imagine, that does not mean that Christ does not shake His head at us at times, exactly like a mother or grandmother, because we happen to think we know better and do something stupid, or make a bad decision or two.

Alright, so now that I have really managed to focus on this mother hen and her chicks, or the mother and grandmother imagery and mission that it elicits to start things out here, let’s shift our focus a little. We of course know that there is more to this story even with only having five verses today. So, let’s focus on that rather sharp remark or awkward reference by Jesus, that followed an awkward warning provided by the Pharisees. For we heard in verse 32, for all intents and purposes, Jesus daring them to go and tell that “fox” to bring it on. He is telling them to tell Herod that He still has some work to do and will be continuing on until He is finished. Then, and only then, will Jesus be along His way. Precisely like when a mother or a grandmother have a plan, and they want and desire to get things accomplished for their children. There is no care or threat in the world that is going to get in the way, because they are about their business, and they are about their mission to serve.

Now, of course one may wonder why in the world a fox is utilized here, and not a bear or a lion, or even a snake. Well, of course the fox is a cunning and sly animal, and of course the fox does indeed cause a threat. However, the fox can only do so much, the fox has limitations. So, Jesus is pretty much saying here that Herod really has no control over Him, despite him being a King and all. Jesus is actually pulling rank, and letting everyone know that the King of Kings shall prevail and has way more power here. Jesus was on a mission and the cross, death, and resurrection were on His horizon. Even Herod was not going to take that away from Him.

Alright, are you tired of all of this animal talk yet? Are you tired of this supposed Mother’s Day message that I seem to be delivering to you today a few months early? Are you sitting there and thinking that there is yet another piece or two to the puzzle that I better link in before I actually wrap up? Well, there is of course this business of Jerusalem that we have touched on a bit. There is this actual lament, or this very expression of grief and sorrow here. We can even relate it to that head shaking that I spoke of earlier. For Jerusalem is indeed the Holy City, the pinnacle, the crown jewel, the apple of the eye, the best and most righteous place; just like a child is to a mother or grandmother. Yet Jesus is truly struggling with how Jerusalem has lost sight of all things, and has managed to forget all that they have learned. When Jesus laments over the fallen Jerusalem He is not doing so out of any sense of hate. He just really despises and is depressed by all that has occurred. The very influence, the wrong people, the wrong leadership that they allowed to take over was so misguiding. Jesus would wish nothing more than for things to come back into balance. Jesus is hopeful that they truly would have focused on the Messiah again, and would have the very freedom offered to them. However, that is not the case, and sometimes that is not the case for us even though it is His desire.

In comparison, we are actually the modern-day Jerusalem here folks. For it is not just a location on a map, but it is a people. Jesus has rescued us time and time again. He has exhibited the very motherly nature of the mother hen, and has stretched out His wings of protection. However, our very hardness of heart at times, our know it all or handle it on our own attitude gets us into even worse situations than we can ever imagine. For verse 35 states, “...you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ” That right there states that if we do not take this time in Lent to really work on ourselves, and change our ways, then we may not see God in all of his Glory and Majesty until the very last days. The biggest fear is that we might not even see it at all.

This very imagery, these few short verses, are really packed with a lot. They elicit a lot of different thoughts if we allow them to. Some of those thoughts are not all too common when we relate things to God, and Jesus’ ministry here on earth. For we do not always have the motherly, caring, and compassionate side of our God front and center. Of course, the times and writings back then were dominated by the male majority, but we should not be so blind. For God created all of us in His very image, not just men. God’s heart, God’s parental nature, is on display here and through all of creation. No one is excluded, and no matter whether we might be disturbed thinking like this, or even picturing it, I assure you that Christ has as many maternal as paternal instincts, and they are on display more than we ever imagine. The Mother Hen was and continues to be at work. Jesus’ work is never finished. Let us all gather in the shelter of her wings, and let us fully see the Glory of God here and now. Let us keep working on ourselves during these forty days of Lent, and let us not just wait for the afterlife to realize and enjoy the majesty and glory that God has in store for all of us.

**Amen.**

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 Second Sunday in Lent

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(11) Taking Faith Home

 March 16, 2025

 Second Sunday in Lent

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**Luke 13:31-35**

Neither Herod’s plotting nor Jerusalem’s resistance to maternal love will deter Jesus from his sacrificial mission.

31 At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to [Jesus], “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” 32 He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. 33 Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ 34 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 35 See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”